

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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DLOS-06 CG-00 DOTE-00 /081 W

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R 301628Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6566

INFO COMICEDEFOR

CINCLANT

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USNATO 1474

USEC BRUSSELS 0400

UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 1148

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS, PFOR, IC, UK, EEC

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER ASSESSES POSSIBLE FISHERIES TALKS WITH EC

1. IN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED AUGUST 28, PRIMEMIN HALLGRIMSSON OFFERED CLEAREST PICTURE TO DATE OF GOI'S ATTITUDE TOWARD PROJECTED FISHERIES NEGOTIATIONS WITH EEC.

2. ANSWERING QUESTIONS FROM INDEPENDENCE PARTY DAILY MORGUNBLADID ON OCCASION OF INCUMBENT COALITION'S SECOND ANNIVERSARY, HALLGRIMSSON TOOK TOUGH-SOUNDING STAND, SAYING THAT INITIATIVE FOR ANY FURTHER TALKS RESTED WITH EEC AND THAT ICELAND'S INTERESTS ALONE WOULD DETERMINE FUTURE OF FOREIGN FISHING IN COUNTRY'S 200-MILE JURISDICTION. HOWEVER, HE LEFT DOOR OPEN FOR POSSIBLE RE-NEWED CONCESSIONS AFTER DEC 1 EXPIRATION OF ICELAND-UK AGREEMENT, DEPENDING ON WHAT EEC OFFERS IN RETURN.

3. PRIMEMIN SAID, IN FULL, "DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE GOI

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AND THE EEC ARE STRICTLY IN PRELIMINARY STAGES. EXPLORATORY

TALKS TOOK PLACE AT THE END OF JULY, AS IS KNOWN. NOTHING HAS BEEN DECIDED REGARDING CONTINUATION OF THESE TALKS. TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, THE EEC WILL HARDLY BE READY FOR ADDITIONAL DISCUSSIONS BEFORE OCTOBER. THE EEC HAS OBVIOUSLY NOT DEVELOPED ITS POSITION, EITHER INTERNALLY OR EXTERNALLY, THOUGH IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE COMMUNITY WILL ANNOUNCE ITS INTENTIONS REGARDING A 200-MILE EXTENSION THIS FALL. WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF DEMANDING ANY NEGOTIATIONS, AND OUR POSITION IS CLEAR THAT ANY DISCUSSIONS WILL BE BASED ON RECIPROCAL FISHING RIGHTS AND THAT TARIFF MATTERS AND OTHER ASPECTS OF TRADE WILL NOT ENTER THE PICTURE. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT WE HAVE LITTLE OR NO ROOM TO BARGAIN BECAUSE OF THE CONDITION OF THE FISH STOCKS. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DECEMBER 1 DEPENDS ON WHETHER WE CONSIDER IT TO BE IN OUR INTEREST TO INSURE FISHING RIGHTS INSIDE THE EEC'S EXPECTED 200-MILE LIMIT. UP UNTIL NOW, THE COMMUNITY HAS NOT MADE CLEAR WHAT IT INTENDS TO OFFER."

4. COMMENT: GOI HAS, OF LATE, BEEN UNDER RENEWED ATTACK FROM POLITICAL OPPOSITION FOR ALLEGEDLY JEOPARDIZING ICELAND'S VITAL INTERESTS IN FISHING NEGOTIATIONS WITH FOREIGNERS, AND HALLGRIMSSON'S STATEMENT ABOVE IS BEING TOUTED IN HIS PARTY'S PRESS AS EFFECTIVE REBUTTAL TO THESE CHARGES. HOWEVER, BOTH PREMIMIN AND FISHERIES MIN, WHO HAD EARLIER DEFENDED GOVERNMENT'S POSITION, HAVE HEDGED ON KEY QUESTION OF WHETHER BRITISH FISHING RIGHTS WILL BE EXTENDED BEYOND DECEMBER 1. THEY ARE UNLIKELY, THEREFORE, TO SILENCE CRITICS SEEKING TO MAKE POLITICAL CAPITAL ON THIS SENSITIVE ISSUE.
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